

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CB

SUBJ: MEETING WITH SIRIK MATAK JANUARY 14

1. I HAD NOTICED THAT OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS SIRIK MATAK HAD BEEN CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT FROM MEETINGS MARSHAL LON NOL HAD ARRANGED FOR VISITING AMERICAN DIGNITARIES AS, FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN SENATORS THURMOND AND SCOTT OR UNDER SECRETARY MAW CAME TO PHNOM PENH. ALTHOUGH SIRIK MATAK HAD BEEN INVITED TO THESE MEETINGS, HE HAD PREFERRED TO STAY AWAY. MY MEETING WITH SIRIK MATAK THIS MORNING CONFIRMED HIS GROWING ESTRANGEMENT FROM THE MARSHAL, BUT HE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE REMAINED PRO-AMERICAN AND THAT HIS ABSENCES FROM SOME OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED MEETINGS SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS TAKING HIS DISTANCE FROM AMERICANS. MY MEETING WITH HIM TODAY WAS VERY OPEN AND, AS USUAL, VERY CORDIAL.

2. MOST SIGNIFICANT POINT SIRIK MATAK MADE IN COURSE OF TODAY'S MEETING WAS NEED TO BRING CAMBODIAN CONFLICT TO AN END DURING 1975. HE SAID HE HAD TALKED WITH MEMBERS OF KHMER DELEGATION TO THE UNGA AND ON BASIS THIS INFORMATION HE IS CONVINCED VICTORY ACHIEVED IN NOV 1974 CANNOT BE REPEATED AT NEXT UNGA. HE ALSO NOTED WANING SUPPORT IN US CONGRESS FOR INDO-CHINA AND THAT, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON FINDING EARLY SETTLEMENT TO CAMBODIAN PROBLEM. I SAID THAT HIS ASSESSMENT PARALLELS OUR OWN VIEWS.

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3. REGARDING SIHANOUK'S ALLEGATIONS ABOUT SIRIK MATAK'S WILLINGNESS TO JOIN HIM, SIRIK MATAK BRUSHED IT ASIDE AS UNFOUNDED, BUT STATED THAT HE WAS NOT GOING TO TAKE PUBLIC ISSUE WITH HIS COUSIN. WHILE SIRIK MATAK CRITICIZED SOME OF SIHANOUK'S PERSONAL QUALITIES AND PAST POLICIES PERSUED BETWEEN 1963-1970, HE NEVERTHELESS STRESSED THAT SIHANOUK WAS NOT A COMMUNIST AND THAT "IN THE INTERESTS OF THE CAMBODIAN NATION", HE THOUGHT NOTHING WAS GAINED BY KEEPING UP AN ARCRIMONIOUS DEBATE WITH HIS COUSIN IN PEKING. CONSIDERING SIRIK MATAK'S KEY ROLE IN THE EVENTS OF MARCH 18, 1970 AND THE SUBSEQUENT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC, I FOUND SIRIK MATAK SINGULARLY RELAXED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT SIHANOUK MAY RETURN ONE DAY AND PLAY A ROLE AGAIN IN CAMBODIA.
DEAN

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